WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for drilling a wellbore having a fluid circuit whereby a drilling
- 2 fluid is supplied to a drill bit and the drilling fluid with entrained cuttings (the
- 3 "return fluid") is returned from the drill bit to a surface location, the method
- 4 comprising:
- 5 (a) positioning a fluid circulation device in the return fluid, the fluid
- 6 circulation device providing the primary motive force for flowing the return fluid
- 7 from the drill bit to the surface location.
- 1 2. The method according to claim (1) wherein the fluid circuit includes a
- 2 supply line and a return line, and further comprising:
- 3 (a) supplying drilling fluid to the drilling assembly via the supply line; and
- 4 (b) returning the return fluid to the surface location via the return line.
- 1 3. The method according to claim (2) wherein the supply line includes at
- 2 least an annulus of the wellbore.
- 1 4. The method according to claim (2) wherein the return line includes one of
- 2 (i) drill string, (ii) a coiled tubing, (iii) a casing, (iv) a liner, and (iv) a tubular
- 3 member.
- 1 5. The method according to claim (1) wherein the fluid circulation device is
- 2 selected from one of (a) a positive displacement pump, (b) a centrifugal type
- 3 pump, (c) a Moineau-type pump, and (d) a jet pump.
- 1 6. The method according to claim (1) further comprising driving the fluid
- 2 circulation device with a drive assembly selected from one of (a) a positive
- 3 displacement drive, (b) a turbine drive, (c) an electric motor, (d) a hydraulic
- 4 motor, and (e) a Moineau-type motor.

- 1 7. The method according to claim (1) further comprising reducing the size of
- 2 cuttings entrained in the return fluid with a comminution device.
- 1 8. The method according to claim (2) further comprising positioning a pump
- 2 in the supply line to providing a supplemental motive force for circulating the
- 3 drilling fluid.
- 1 9. The method according to claim (8) wherein the supply line includes at
- 2 least an annulus of the wellbore.
- 1 10. The method according to claim (1) further comprising energizing the fluid
- 2 circulation device with one of (i) a fuel cell; (ii) hydraulic fluid; (iii) geothermal
- 3 power; (iv) surface supplied electrical power; and (v) compressed gas.
- 1 11. The method according to claim (1) further comprising rotating the drill bit
- 2 rotated by a motor that is operated by one of (i) a fuel cell; (ii) hydraulic fluid; (iii)
- 3 geothermal power; and (iv) surface supplied electrical power.
- 1 12. The method according to claim (1) further comprising rotating the drill bit
- 2 and driving the fluid circulation device with a same motor.
- 1 13. The method according to claim (1) further comprising providing a localized
- 2 flow rate proximate to the drill bit that is functionally effective to wash the drill bit
- 3 of cuttings.
- 1 14. The method according to claim (1) wherein the drilling assembly includes
- 2 a drill bit, and further comprising: rotating the drill bit with a drill string at least
- 3 partially formed of a liner.
- 1 15. The method according to claim (1) wherein the surface location is an
- 2 offshore platform.

- 1 16. The method according to claim (1) further comprising positioning a
- 2 secondary fluid circulation device in serial alignment with the fluid circulation
- 3 device, the fluid circulation device and the secondary fluid circulation device
- 4 cooperating to provide the primary motive force for flowing the return fluid from
- 5 the drill bit to the surface location.
- 1 17. The method according to claim (1) further comprising operating the fluid
- 2 circulation device substantially independent of drill bit rotation.
- 1 18. A system for drilling a wellbore, comprising:
- 2 (a) a fluid circuit for supplying a drilling fluid to a drill bit and returning
- 3 the drilling fluid with entrained cuttings (the "return fluid") from the drill bit to the
- 4 surface; and
- 5 (b) a fluid circulation device in the return fluid, said fluid circulation
- 6 device providing the primary motive force for flowing the return fluid to the
- 7 surface.
- 1 19. The system according to claim (18) wherein said fluid circuit includes a
- 2 supply line for conveying drilling fluid to said drill bit and a return line for returning
- 3 the return fluid to the surface
- 1 20. The system according to claim (19) wherein said supply line comprises at
- 2 least an annulus of the wellbore.
- 1 21. The system according to claim (19) wherein said return line comprises
- one of (i) drill string, (ii) a coiled tubing, (iii) a casing, (iv) a liner, and (iv) a tubular
- 3 member.
- 1 22. The system according to claim (18) wherein said fluid circulation device is
- 2 selected from one of (a) a positive displacement pump, (b) a centrifugal type
- 3 pump, (c) a jet pump, and (d) a Moineau-type pump.

- 1 23. The system according to claim (18) wherein said fluid circulation device is
- 2 driven by one of (a) a positive displacement drive, (b) a turbine drive, (c) a
- 3 electric motor, (d) a hydraulic motor, and (e) a Moineau-type motor.
- 1 24. The system according to claim (18) further comprising a comminution
- 2 device for reducing the size of cuttings entrained in the return fluid.
- 1 25. The system according to claim (19) further comprising a pump positioned
- 2 in said supply line to provide a supplemental motive force for flowing the drilling
- 3 fluid.
- 1 26. The system according to claim (25) wherein the supply line includes at
- 2 least an annulus of the wellbore.
- 1 27. The system according to claim (18) wherein said fluid circulation device is
- 2 driven by a drive assembly energized by one of (i) a fuel cell; (ii) hydraulic fluid;
- 3 (iii) geothermal power; (iv) surface supplied hydraulic fluid; and (v) surface
- 4 supplied electrical power.
- 1 28. The system according to claim (18) further comprising a motor coupled to
- 2 the drill bit, said motor being operated by one of (i) a fuel cell; (ii) hydraulic fluid;
- 3 (iii) geothermal power; (iv) surface supplied hydraulic fluid; (v) surface supplied
- 4 electrical power, and (vi) compressed gas.
- 1. 29. The system according to claim (18) wherein said drill bit is rotated by one
- 2 of: (i) a drill string at least partially formed of a liner, and (ii) a motor for driving
- 3 said fluid circulation device
- 1 30. The system according to claim (19) further comprising:
- 2 (a) a variable volume tank positioned proximate to a seabed floor, said
- 3 tank supplying drilling fluid into said supply line; and

- 4 (b) an offshore platform adapted to receive the return fluid flowing through said return line.
- 1 31. The system according to claim (18) further comprising a secondary fluid
- 2 circulation device in serial alignment with said fluid circulation device, said fluid
- 3 circulation device and said secondary fluid circulation device cooperating to
- 4 provide the primary motive force for flowing the return fluid from the drill bit to the
- 5 surface location.
- 1 32. The system according to claim (18) further comprising an near bit fluid
- 2 circulation device positioned proximate to said drill bit, said near bit fluid
- 3 circulation device adapted to provide a localized flow rate functionally effective
- 4 for cleaning the drill bit of cuttings.
- 1 33. The system according to claim (18) wherein said fluid circulation device is
- 2 configured to operate independently of drill bit rotation.